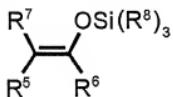


IN THE CLAIMS:

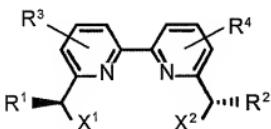
Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Currently amended) A method for producing an optically active hydroxymethylated compound, comprising reacting a silicon enolate and formaldehyde, in the presence of a catalyst, in an aqueous solution or a mixed solvent of water and an organic solvent,

wherein the silicon enolate is represented by the following formula:



wherein R^5 represents a hydrogen atom or an alkyl group and R^6 represents an alkyl group, an alkyl-aryl group, or an aryl group, provided that a phenyl group, a benzyl group, a phenyl ethyl group, or a phenyl vinyl group, or wherein R^5 and R^6 may together with the carbon atoms to which they are bonded form an indene, 1,2-dihydronaphthylene, cyclohexene, cycloheptene or cyclopentene ring, R^7 represents a hydrogen atom, an alkyl group, and alkyl-aryl group, or an aryl group, a phenyl group, a benzyl group, a phenyl ethyl group, or a phenyl vinyl group, and the R^8 groups, which may be identical or different, are each alkyl groups, and the catalyst is obtained by mixing a ligand or its symmetric isomer and a Lewis acid, wherein the ligand is represented by the following formula:

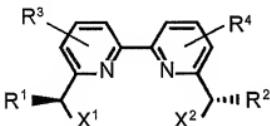


wherein each R^1 and R^2 group, which may be identical or different, is an alkyl group or an aryl group, provided that at least one of R^1 and R^2 contains at least three carbon atoms, the R^3 and R^4 groups, which may be identical or different, are each hydrogen atoms, alkyl groups containing one to four carbon atoms or alkoxy groups, the X^1 and X^2 groups, which may be identical or different, are each $-\text{OH}$ or $-\text{OMe}$, and

the Lewis acid is represented by MY_n , wherein M is Cu, Zn, Fe, Sc or a lanthanoid element, Y is a halogen atom, OAc, OCOCF₃, ClO₄, SbF₆, PF₆ or OSO₂CF₃ and n is 2 or 3.

2. (Canceled)

3. (Withdrawn – currently amended) A catalyst obtained by mixing a ligand or its symmetric isomer and a Lewis acid, wherein the ligand is represented by the following formula (chemical formula 1):



wherein each R¹ and R² group, which may be identical or different, are hydrogen atoms, is an alkyl groups or aryl groups, provided at least one of R¹ and R² contains at least three carbon atoms, R³ and R⁴, which may be identical or different, are hydrogen atoms, alkyl groups containing one to four carbon atoms or alkoxy groups, and X¹ and X², which may be identical or different, are represented by OR^9 , SR^{10} or NHR^{11} , wherein R⁹ to R¹⁴ are hydrogen atoms or alkyl groups $-OH$ or $-OMe$, and the Lewis acid is represented by MY_n , wherein M is Cu, Zn, Fe, Sc or a lanthanoid element, Y is a halogen atom, OAc, OCOCF₃, ClO₄, SbF₆, PF₆ or OSO₂CF₃ and n is 2 or 3.